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ABSTRACT

This report provides results both in narrative and graphic formats of the Annual Fees Survey that included all 115 Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in the United Kingdom. Throughout the report, distinction is made between two hourly rates of fees charged for part-time education: courses categorized under Schedule 2 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, formerly "vocational" or "certificate-bearing" courses, and those not so categorized under Schedule 2, formerly "nonvocational" or "leisure" courses. Section 1 focuses on variations in fees within LEAs. Section 2 reports on fees charged for Schedule 2 courses: examination courses and basic education. Extra fees (examination and registration) and reduced fees for second courses are also reported. Section 3 reports on fees for courses outside Schedule 2. Variations between centers and according to type of LEA are discussed as are extra fees and reduced fees for second courses. Section 4 summarizes fee changes and the reasons for them. Section 5 focuses on concessionary fees. Narrative and bar charts are provided on concessions to the following groups: older adults, unemployed students, unwaged students, students receiving Income Support or Family Credit, physically handicapped students, students with learning disabilities, and students aged under 18. Sections 6-8 report findings on number and length of class meetings, methods and timing of payment, and enrollments. (YLB)

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NIACE INFORMATION SERVICE

FEE SURVEY 1992-93

Indicators of fee levels charged to part-time adult students by Local Education Authorities

Carolyn Winkless

February 1993

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

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We are grateful to all those LEA Officers who responded to the Fees Survey. Whilst some information was received from all 115 LEAs (excluding the City of London and the Isles of Scilly), not all LEAs were able to answer all the questions, and the percentages given are the percentages of respondents to the relevant question.

Introduction

The passage of last year's Further and Higher Education Act, establishing FE Colleges as incorporated institutions independent of Local Education Authorities from April 1993, means that this is the final year in which NIACE's Annual Fees Survey will appear in its present form. This year's survey shows that, possibly in anticipation of these changes, many more Authorities are not collecting data on fees charged by their colleges. Future surveys will, therefore, supplement information concerning local authority courses with information from institutions in the new FEFC sectors.

Overall then, the picture is one of increasing complexity - something which is likely to increase the value of future surveys to providers and policy-makers in tracking changes and trends.

A number of points illustrate the range of fees charged and once again demonstrate that the most important variable affecting adults' access to study opportunities is where they live:

- For GCSE and most other Schedule 2 courses, almost half of the respondents charge 66 pence per hour, as recommended by the Council of Local Education Authorities. Only two LEAs charge less than this; the highest rate is 195pph and the mean average is 92pph.

- For courses outside Schedule 2, LEA standard rates range from 60pph to 209pph. The mean average and the median is 125pph. Over 80% charge between 100pph and 150pph although the standard deviation is 31.6 compared with 29.1 in 1991 and 16.7 in 1986.

- Increases in fees of more than 10% since last year were reported by 23% of LEAs for certificate-bearing courses, and by 42% for courses outside Schedule 2, including in four instances, increases of more than 30%. The highest percentage increases are due to budget cuts within the LEA or to LEA policy of increasing income from non-Schedule 2 courses.

- Many LEAs are adopting less generous fee concession policies, one abolishing all concessions for non-Schedule 2 courses. Concessions are being reduced especially for older people. Fee reductions for Senior Citizens have been withdrawn completely in four authorities while the percentage of the standard fee paid by over-60s has increased in at least seven LEAs, including two in which courses used to be free and are now half the standard rate. It is particularly depressing that this is occurring in the European Year of Older People.

- In almost all cases, the withdrawal or reduction of concessions for particular groups is blamed for reduced enrolment from among these groups. Eight respondents also believe that an increase in the standard rate is responsible for reduced enrolments overall. At the same time however, there is an increase in the number of people eligible for concessionary fees due to poverty or unemployment and several respondents mentioned significant increases in the number of people claiming concessions, including one reporting a 50% increase in the numbers of unemployed students enrolled.

This year has been a time of transition and instability for publicly-supported part-time learning for adults and there are real fears that the range and volume of opportunities available are being reduced significantly. The extent to which these fears are justified, the impact of the new Funding Councils' formulae for part-time study and the ability of LEAs to resist financial pressure on their remaining adult and community education budgets all remain to be seen. NIACE will continue to monitor the changes.

ALASTAIR THOMSON
Planning & Development Officer

SECTION 1

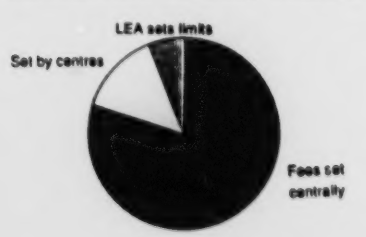
Variations in fees within Local Education Authorities

1.1 Most LEAs have two distinct hourly rates of fees charged for part-time education. In most cases the distinction has previously been between "vocational" or "certificate bearing" courses on the one hand, and "non-vocational" or "leisure" courses on the other. The decision on whether a particular course was vocational or recreational was often arbitrary, and this distinction is disliked by many adult educators but has been used in previous Fees Surveys to reflect current practice. Schedule 2 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 sets out those courses to be funded through the Further Education Funding Councils from April 1993. Support for LEA courses outside Schedule 2 continues to be assumed in Standard Spending Assessments. This year we have made a distinction between courses categorised under Schedule 2, and those not so categorised. Not all LEAs yet use this distinction, and in several LEAs there will be a few cases of Schedule 2 courses charged at the rate here given for Non-Schedule 2 courses, and vice versa. In many cases the distinction is actually between courses provided by the Colleges of Further Education (the lower rate) and courses provided through a separate Adult or Community Education Service.

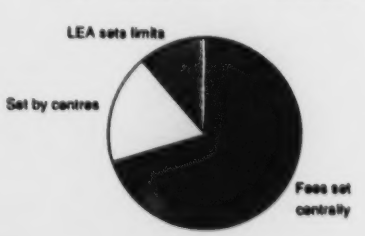
1.2 In 92 LEAs there is a standard rate for Schedule 2 courses which is the same throughout LEA Adult Education provision. (See figure 1.1.) In 102 LEAs there is a standard rate for Basic Education, which is often provided free by the LEA. Only 81 LEAs have a standard rate for courses not categorised under Schedule 2. In 13 LEAs centres are allowed to set fees within limits set by the LEA, and in a further 21 LEAs, centres or areas have full autonomy to set their own fees. In such cases the figures used for the statistics in this report are an estimated average hourly fee.

Figure 1:1. Percentages of LEAs which set a standard rate for fees

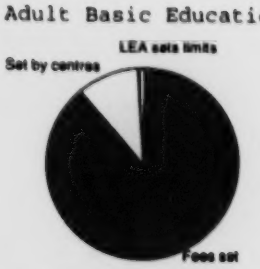
certificate bearing courses



Non- Schedule 2 courses



Adult Basic Education



1.3 *Further Education Colleges*

The independence of the Colleges of Further Education under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, due to come into effect in April 1993, has been anticipated by many LEAs in that several LEA officers did not have information on the fees charged by their FE Colleges. Other returns were made for the LEA service excluding the CFEs (including one LEA which has autonomous centres, where the estimated average fee is that of the non-CFE centres only). In 7 of these LEAs, the courses delivered through the CFEs form a minor part of adult provision, and these LEAs are included in the total of those with a standard LEA rate. However, where education for adults is provided solely by one or more Colleges of Further Education, the practice of the Colleges is here counted as the practice of the LEA, both in cases where the LEA sets a standard rate, and also where it has been necessary to calculate average rates.

1.4 *Devolution to voluntary organisations*

The City of Newcastle LEA was unable to give any information on fees, as the LEA no longer runs any education for adults, but instead gives grants to voluntary groups based on what were area centres. (This decision was taken as a result of budget cuts, and informal enquiries among the centres suggests that fees have risen and enrolments fallen since this policy was adopted.) This method of delivery is also used in Walsall, but there the LEA specifies a maximum fee for courses which are subsidised by LEA grants, as well as insisting that the LEA policy on concessions is followed. Grants are made to private consortia in Hampshire, but where they give concessions approved by the LEA, the LEA refunds them.

1.5 *Courses charged above the standard rate*

In 62 of those LEAs which stated a standard rate or set fee limits, self-financing courses were run in addition to provision subsidised by the LEA - 18 throughout the LEA and 44 at the discretion of individual centres. This is slightly more common with courses outside Schedule 2 (the figures for certificate-bearing courses are 14 and 44 respectively). Several students are therefore paying higher rates than those quoted here. More rarely, centres within these LEAs may put on particular courses at a lower rate than the LEA rate; these are usually aimed at particular groups such as the unemployed, or geographical areas of particular poverty. One LEA reported a two-tier system of LEA-supported Non-Schedule 2 courses; an "aided" rate and an "economic" rate which is 18% higher. Courses charged at the "economic" rate are not fully self-supporting, but this rate is charged for popular sports courses which attract enough support to be fully subscribed even at the higher fee. The concessionary rate for such courses is two thirds of the full fee, whereas "aided" courses are free to many concessionary groups. Similarly, in other LEAs concessions do not normally apply to self financing courses.

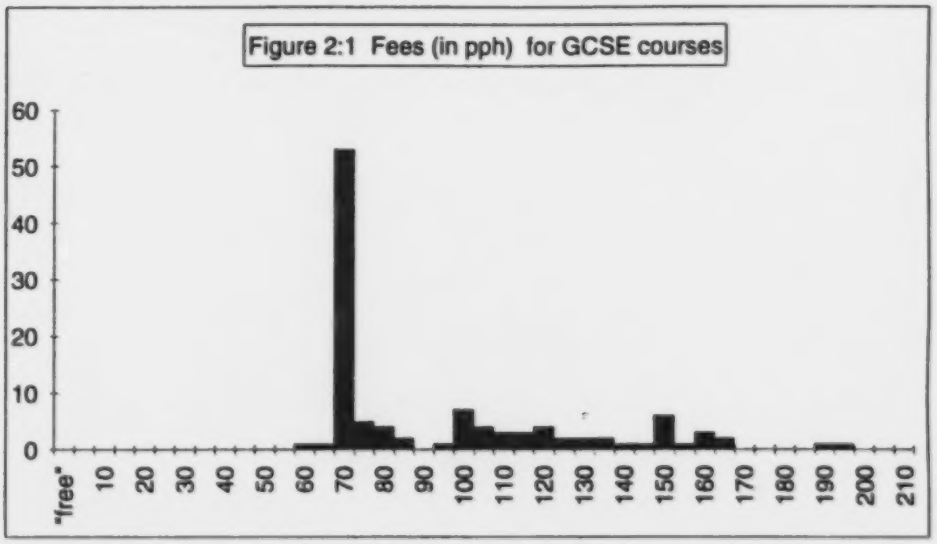
SECTION 2

Fees charged for courses listed in Schedule 2 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992

Examination courses

2.1 *GCSE courses*

Figure 2.1 shows the hourly fee charged for a GCSE course. Almost half of the respondents charge approximately 66 pence per hour, as recommended by the Council of Local Education Authorities. Only two LEAs charge less than this; the lowest rate charged is 60pph (pence per hour) and the highest rate is 195pph. The median ("half way figure") is 71pph and the mean average is 92pph.



2.2 *A level courses*

Fees for A level courses range from 66pph to 190pph. Where a figure was given for A level courses, this is usually the same as that for GCSE courses. Seven LEAs charge more for A-level courses; one charges a course fee which gives a lower hourly fee than that of the GCSE course fee, as more hours are taken for the course. The median is 71pph and the mean average is 94pph.

2.3 *Other examination courses*

Where LEAs were able to give a figure for vocational qualifications, this was almost always the same as the rate charged for GCSE courses. Again, the most common fee is 66pph; the mean average is 93pph. Eleven charge higher fees than for GCSE courses. A few noted a differentiation between this rate (charged for RSA II, NVQ level II etc) and a higher rate (250pph) for certain vocational qualifications. One quoted the 88pph recommended by CLEA for advanced courses. One charged the "non-certificate" (ie higher) rate for courses below RSA II standard.

Basic Education

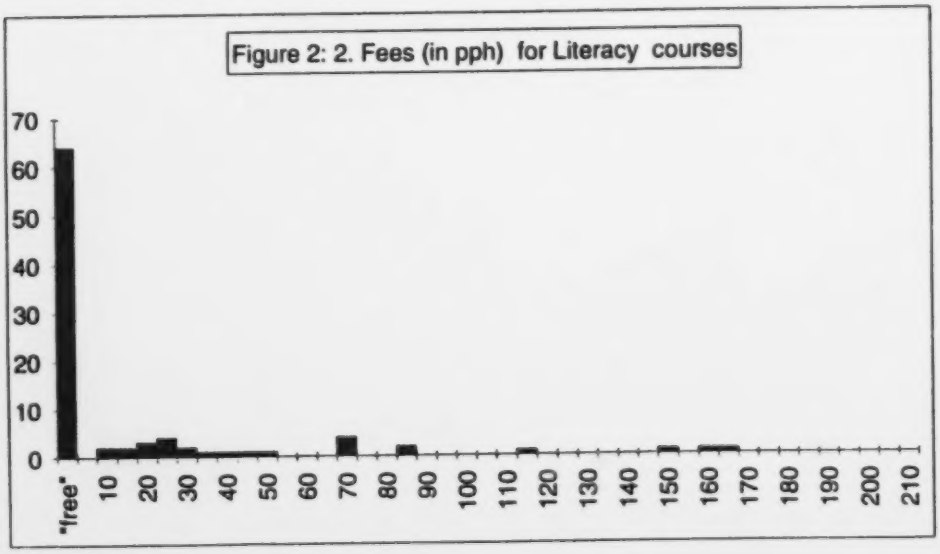
2.4 *Literacy and Numeracy*

Free Literacy courses are provided by 72 LEAs, and free Numeracy courses by 68 LEAs.

Where a fee is charged for Literacy and Numeracy, it is often a single fee for any amount of tuition, eg: £13.20 per course - £9.00 per term - £6.45 per term - £6.00 per term - £5.00 per term (3 LEAs). This is often classed as a registration fee, ranging from £2 per year to £5 per term.

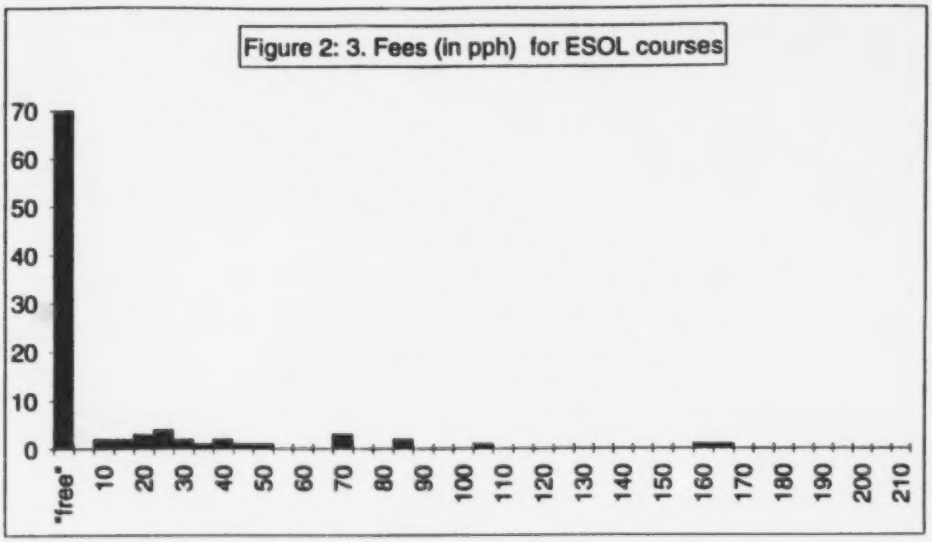
Six LEAs charge the same rate for Basic Education as for examination courses. In these cases, concessions are given according to the criteria used for examination courses. Occasionally Basic Education courses are charged at the concessionary rate either for Schedule 2 courses (6 LEAs) or for Non-Schedule 2 courses (2 LEAs). One LEA charges the same rate for Literacy and Numeracy as for courses outside Schedule 2. Others with semi-autonomous centres, stated that courses are free when provided through the LEA's own Basic Education programme, but charged at the non-Schedule 2 rate when run as part of the centre's own programme.

Figure 2.2 shows the hourly fee charged for Literacy courses. The mean average fee is 12pph, but among those LEAs where any fee is charged the mean average is 49pph, and the median is 29pph.



2.5 *English for Speakers of Other Languages*

ESOL courses are provide free by 64 LEAs. 18 charge the same reduced rate as for Literacy and Numeracy, while 8 charge the same rate as for GCSE courses.



Access to Higher Education and Preparatory courses

2.6 Eight LEAs provide free Access courses. 38 charge the GCSE fee, while two class them with Basic Education and two class them with courses outside Schedule 2. In both these cases the relevant remissions apply, and several respondents pointed out that as Access courses were largely aimed at the unemployed, the vast majority of people on Access courses were eligible for concessionary fees; in some cases full remission would be granted.

2.7 The situation is similar in regard to courses preparing students for entry onto examination courses. Ten LEAs provide free courses, while 47 charge the GCSE fee. One classes these courses with Basic Education, and three charge the Non-Schedule 2 rate. In some LEAs, either the Basic Education or the certificate course rate may apply, depending on the precise type of course. The mean average for Access course fees is 83pph, and for Preparatory courses, 77pph.

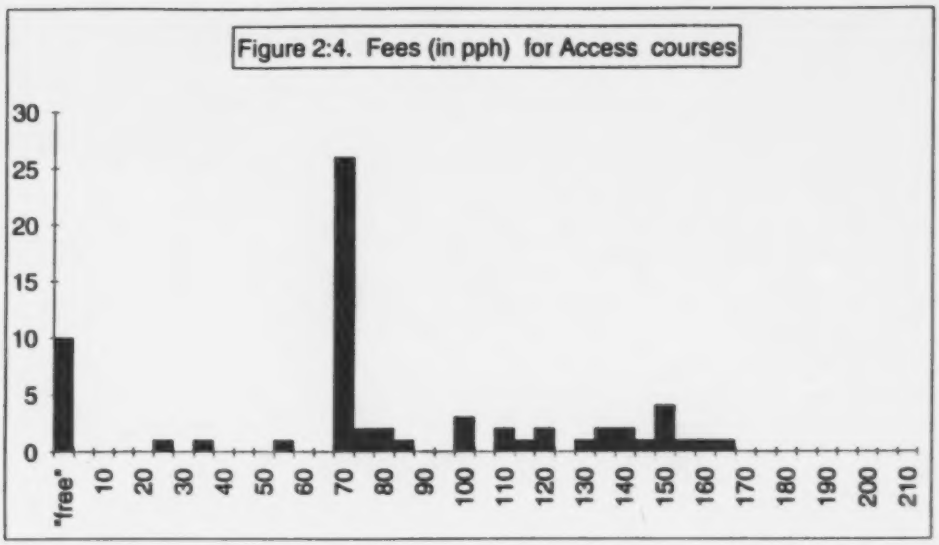


Figure 2:4. Fees (in pph) for Access courses
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
"free"
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
110
120
130
140
150
160
170
180
190
200
210

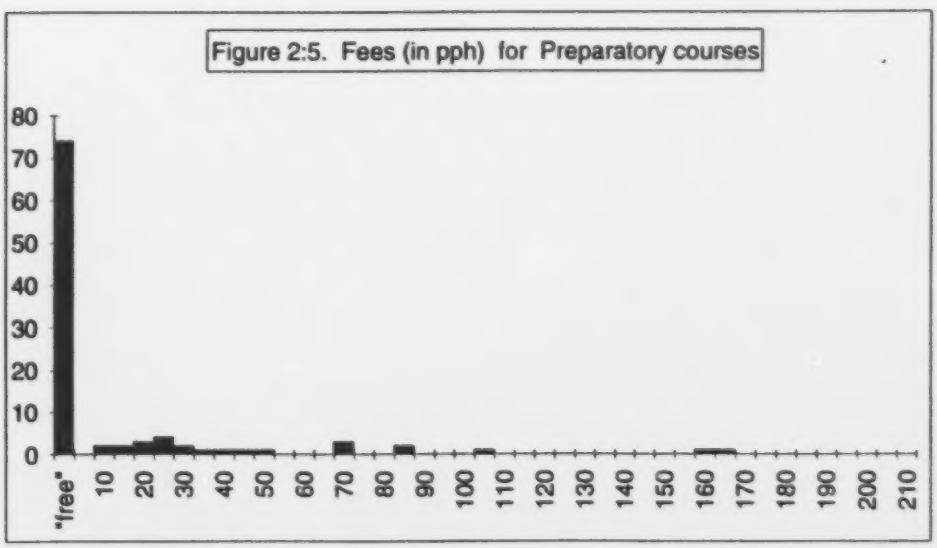


Figure 2:5. Fees (in pph) for Preparatory courses
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
"free"
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90
100
110
120
130
140
150
160
170
180
190
200
210

Extra fees

2.8 *Examination Fees*

Students on examination courses must pay their own examination fees in 57% of the LEAs which responded to this question, together with a further 2% who made exceptions for students eligible for concessions. Registration fees for courses such as BTEC courses must also be paid by the student, normally at the beginning of the course.

2.9 *Registration Fees*

Twelve LEAs mentioned registration fees for examination courses charged throughout the LEA. The normal fee is approximately £2. In addition, some centres charged their own registration fees in a further nine LEAs, usually ranging from 50p to £4. This fee is normally kept by the centre. Registration fees are charged for Basic Education in 19 LEAs; as mentioned above, registration fees are often the only fee charged for Basic Education courses.

2.10 **Reduced fees for second courses**

Six LEAs (plus five "in some centres") offer reduced fees for second or subsequent courses, and six have a maximum fee for multiple enrolments. Four offer short "taster" courses free or at reduced rates, and a further 23 reported that some centres offer this. These "special offers" are often only available to particular groups such as pensioners or the unemployed. Five LEAs offer second courses at a reduced rate to certain groups, six have a maximum fee for multiple enrolments, and eight offer "tasters" to particular groups.

SECTION 3

Fees for courses outside Schedule 2 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992

3.1 Figure 3.1 shows the fees charged by LEAs in November 1992 for courses not categorised under Schedule 2. This may be compared with figure 3.2, which shows the fees charged for similar courses in November 1991. The mean average is 125pph, as is the median ("half-way" figure). 80% of LEAs charge between 100pph and 150pph, which are the two most common fees. The standard deviation is 31.6, compared with 29.1 in 1991 and 16.7 in 1986.

Figure 3:1: Fees for Non-Schedule 2 courses 1992

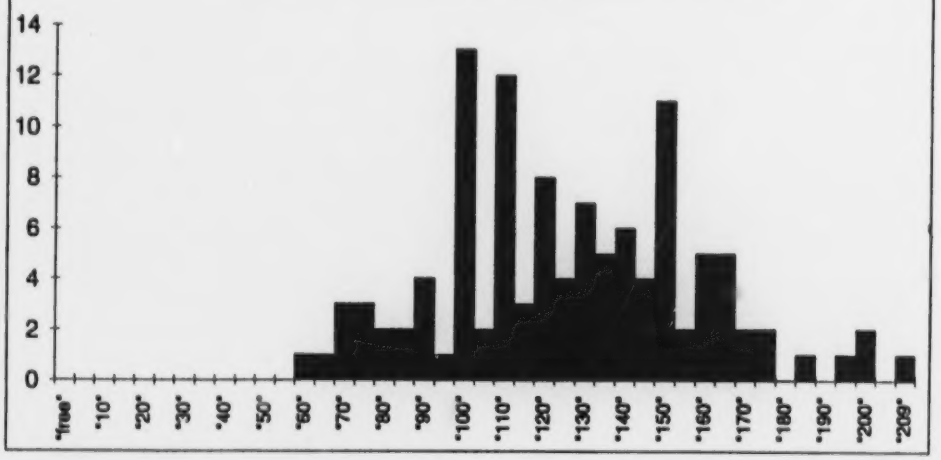
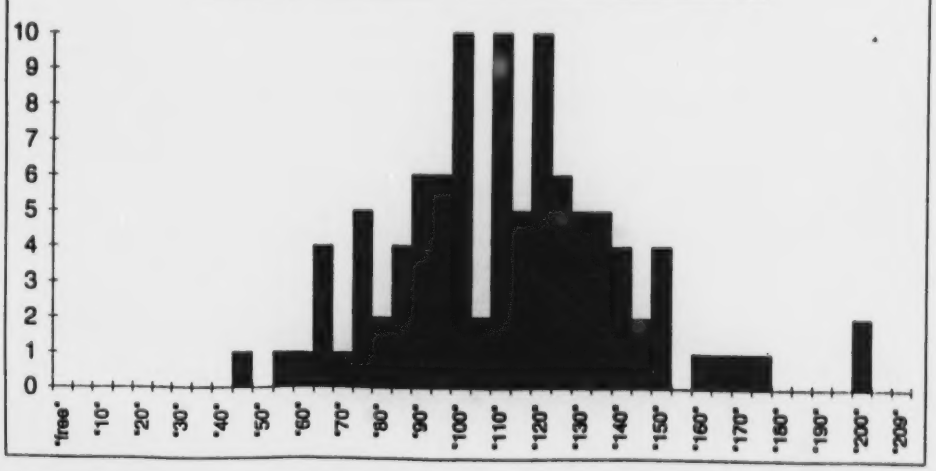


Figure 3:2: Fees for Non-Schedule 2 courses 1991



3.2 *Variations between centres*

Within those 28 LEAs which do not have a set LEA rate, fees range from 84pph to 350pph. In general, the average rate tends to be higher where the LEA does not set the fees - the mean average among these LEAs (of the figures used in Figure 3.1) is 143pph, and the median is 147pph. (The mean average among those LEAs which do have a set LEA rate is 120pph, the median is 110pph.) Minimum fees range from 84 to 117, and maximum fees range from 165 to 320 (with the exception of one College of Higher Education charging 629pph for one course!).

3.3 *Variations according to type of Local Authority*

	All LEAs	Counties	Metro-politan Boroughs	Outer London	Inner London
Mean average	125.1	139.0	111.6	130.6	101.7
Median	125.0	144.0	110.0	127.5	100.0
Mode	100.0	150.0	100.0	150.0	100.0
Standard deviation	31.6	30.7	24.4	32.9	18.8
Lowest fee	60.0	60.0	66.0	66.0	66.0
Highest fee	209.0	209.0	200.0	200.0	150.0
Range of 80% of LEAs	100.0 to 150.0	100.0 to 170.0	80.0 to 135.0	100.0 to 165.0	85.0 to 110.0

3.3.1 Although the fees within Inner London are closer to each other than those of other LEAs, they are increasing in diversity; the standard deviation last year was 8.8 where now it is 18.8.

3.4 **Extra fees**

Centre heads are often allowed to charge higher fees to cover the use of expensive equipment (eg Sports courses) or materials (eg Crafts courses).

3.4.1 *Registration fees*

Thirteen LEAs mentioned registration fees for Non-Schedule 2 courses charged throughout the LEA. The normal fee is approximately £2. In addition, some centres charged their own registration fees, usually ranging from 50p to £4. This fee is normally kept by the centre.

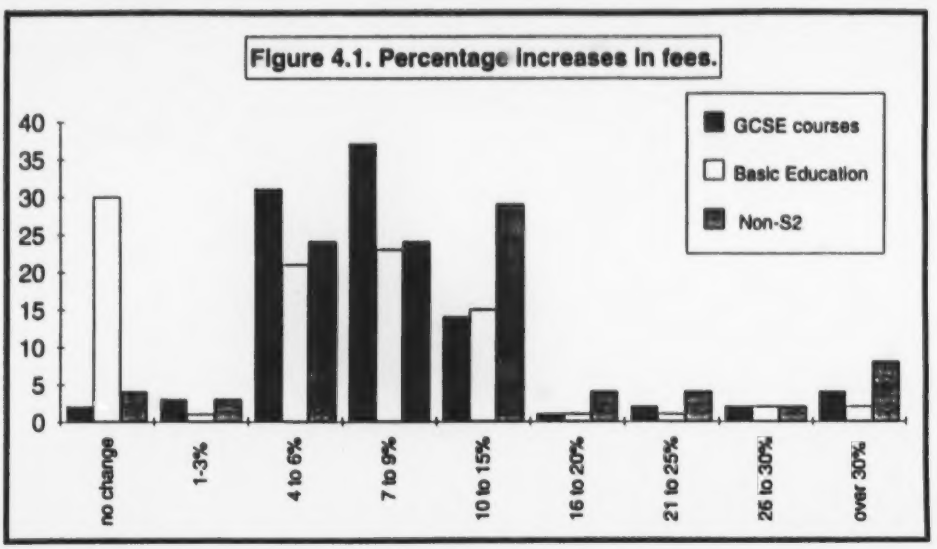
3.5 **Reduced fees for second courses**

Five LEAs (plus nine "in some centres") offer reduced fees for second or subsequent courses, and three have a maximum fee for multiple enrolments. Ten offer short "taster" courses free or at reduced rates, and a further 21 reported that some centres offer this. These "special offers" are often only available to particular groups such as pensioners or the unemployed. Six LEAs offer second courses at a reduced rate to certain groups, five have a maximum fee for multiple enrolments, and six offer "tasters" to particular groups.

SECTION 4

Fee Changes

4.1 Figure 4.1 shows the percentage changes in fees for certificate-bearing courses, Basic Education and Non-Schedule 2 courses since November 1991.



4.2 **Reasons for fee changes**

4.2.1 The highest percentage increases are due to budget cuts within the LEA, or to LEA policy of increasing income from Non-Schedule 2 courses:

- Increase of 67%: "Fees for non-priority Non Schedule 2 classes should cover marginal cost of course" [Tameside]
- Increase of 44%: "Non Schedule 2 courses are offered on a marginal costing basis" [Salford]
- Increase of 50%: "cut to AE budget, owing to £12m Council overspend" [Islington]
- Increase of 42% "what the market will bear" [Gloucestershire]
- Increase of 30%: "AE is totally devolved to CFEs" [Warwickshire]
- 50% increase in certificate bearing courses: "Colleges required to meet increased fee income targets as part of the Council's 1992-3 budget" [Harrow]
- 30% increase in certificate bearing courses: "income requirements" [Northamptonshire]

4.2.2 Six LEAs have increased the standard fee above the rate of inflation in order to protect concessionary fees, including one where certificate-bearing courses have increased by 50% and Non-Schedule 2 courses by 37% [Croydon]. One which saw from last year's Fees Survey that the fee was lower than that of comparable authorities, has put up the standard fee closer to the national average, in order to use the money to fund more generous concessions.

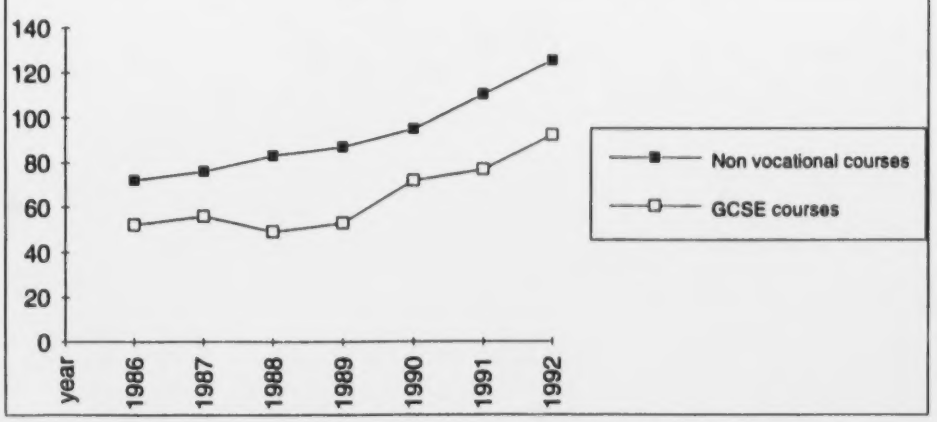
4.2.3 Twelve LEAs stated that Regional Advisory Council recommendations influenced the setting of fees (in addition to those where the RAC recommends the CLEA rate). The fees of neighbouring LEAs were mentioned by a further two respondents as having had an effect on fee policies.

4.2.4 Eight LEAs mentioned that market forces or the predicted effect on student takeup influenced the setting of fees; one had kept fees down to last year's level because of the depression and students' assumed inability to afford an increase.

4.2.5 LEAs which follow the CLEA rate have increased certificate-bearing courses by 6%. In five LEAs the same rate is used for Non-Schedule 2 courses, and in a further three, Non-Schedule 2 courses are set at a percentage of the Schedule 2 rate, and have therefore also increased by 6%.

4.2.6 Inflation was mentioned by 11 LEAs as a reason for small increases in fees. Other factors included the increase in tutors' salaries (9 LEAS) and other overheads such as materials costs (7 LEAs).

Figure 4:2. Average fees (in pph) over the last seven years



SECTION 5

Concessionary fees

5.1 It is common for an LEA to have two or even three concessionary rates, in addition to the standard fee. The most generous concessions are given to the unemployed, and the least generous tend to be given to older adults. Other groups on a low income may be classed with one or the other of these, or have a third rate somewhere in between. A typical LEA, therefore, might charge 10% of the full fee to the unemployed, charge half the fee to a variety of low-income groups, and make a small reduction to older adults. Concessionary rates are normally set at a percentage of the standard fee; often where there are variations in the standard fee, between centres or between courses, this is reflected in the concessionary rates. The bar charts of actual fees given on the following pages, are comparable with the standard fees in figure 2:1 and figure 3:1; where an average has been used for the standard fee this has been used to calculate the concessionary fee.

5.2 *Concessions to non-residents*

Concessions are also available to non-residents in 36% of responding LEAs. This includes two where non-residents are charged a higher standard rate, where the concessionary rate to non-residents is correspondingly higher. A further 18% give concessions to students from LEAs with which there are reciprocal agreements. 47% give no concessions to non-residents. This is not much of an issue among large counties where only a small portion of the area is close enough to neighbouring LEAs to attract students, but among the Metropolitan Boroughs only 12% automatically gave concessions to non-residents, 64% gave no concessions and 25% had reciprocal agreements.

5.3 *Concessions for ABE classes*

Basic Education is often charged at the concessionary rate for either certificate courses or Non-Schedule 2 courses. Where this is the case, there are no further concessions for specific groups of people. Where ABE is charged at the full certificate or Non-Schedule 2 rate, the same concessions apply as for the relevant courses. Norfolk LEA, however, has this year changed its concessions policy to give free courses to the unemployed on Basic Education courses.

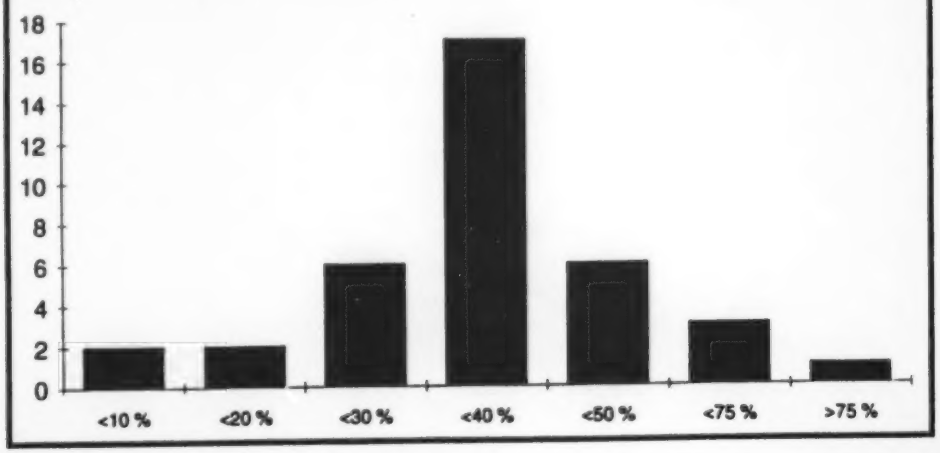
5.4 *Changes in concessionary fee policies*

One LEA has abolished all concessions for Non-Schedule 2 courses, in line with its policy that such courses should be self-supporting. Otherwise the criteria used by each LEA for eligibility for concessions are the same as last year unless otherwise stated. However, within some LEAs there is an increase in courses which do not attract concessions. Apart from self-financing courses, one LEA has a concessionary rate of 60% of the full fee for popular sports courses, whilst giving full remission to many categories for mainstream courses. In Bexley, priority at enrolment is given to full fee payers in evening classes from Monday to Thursday where an equivalent class is available during the daytime.

5.5 *Changes in concessionary rates*

Two LEAs [Rochdale and Northumberland] have reviewed their fee concessions policies so that free tuition (for the unemployed, unwaged, retired etc.) has been replaced by a percentage of the full fee. Two LEAs [Surrey and Clwyd] have increased the percentage of the full fee paid by concessionary groups. On the other hand, five LEAs have deliberately kept down the actual fees paid by concessionary groups despite having to make large increases in the standard fee.

Figure 5.1. Percentage of students on concessionary rates



5.6 *Proportion of students on concessionary rates*

Figure 5.1 indicates the percentage of enrolments charged at the concessionary fee. Only one third of the LEAs were able to provide sufficient information for this, but the available figures show wide variations between LEAs. Many respondents had noticed a large increase (50% in one case) in the proportion of students eligible for concessions, not as a result of changed criteria but due to a rise in unemployment or recession.

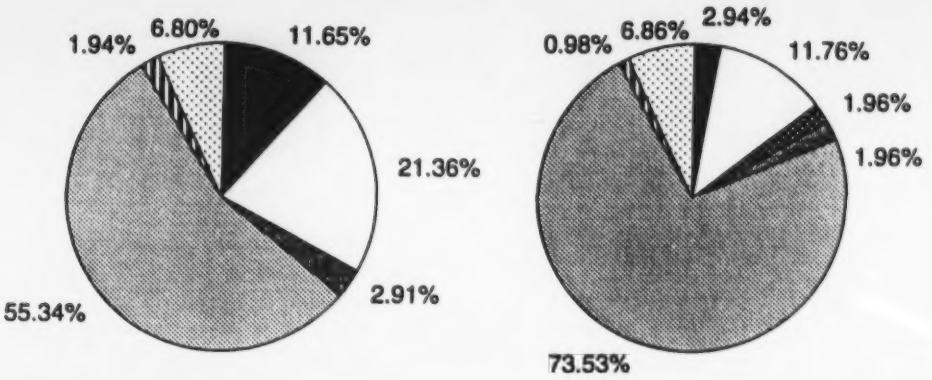
5.7 Key to Pie Charts on the following pages:

- Full remission given (all LEA)
- No remission given
- Reduced fee (all LEA); free in some centres
- Reduced fee (all LEA); further reductions in some centres
- Reduced fee (all LEA)
- Free in some centres
- Reduced in some centres

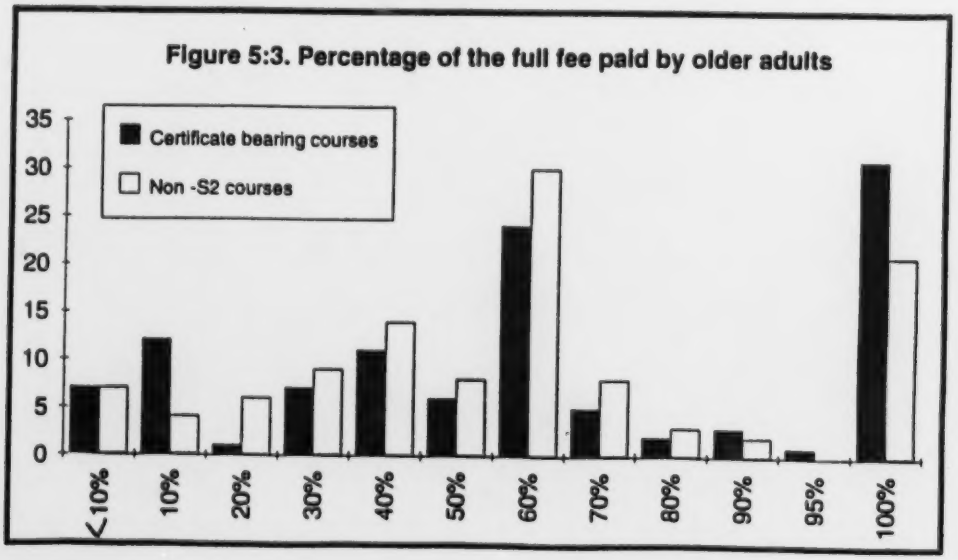
5.8 Concessions to older adults

Certificate-bearing courses **Non-Schedule 2 courses**

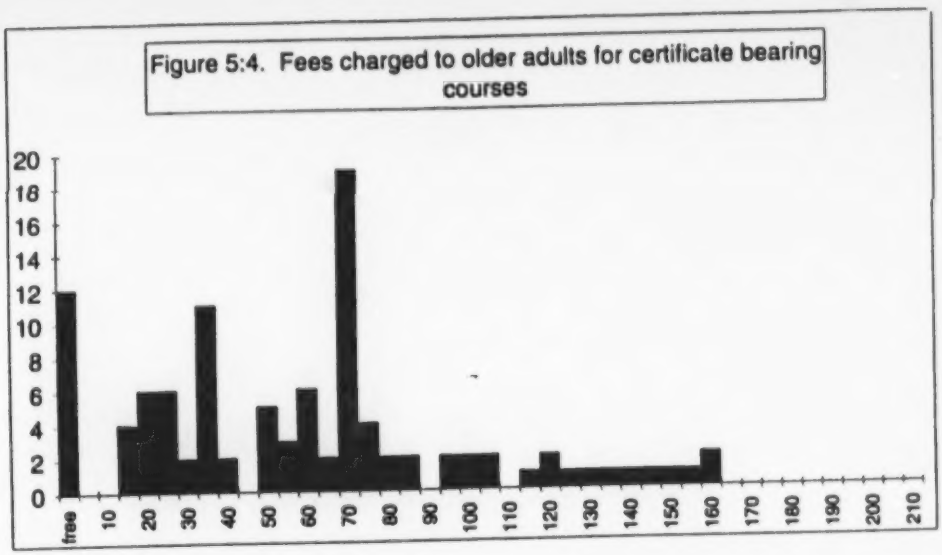
Figure 5.2

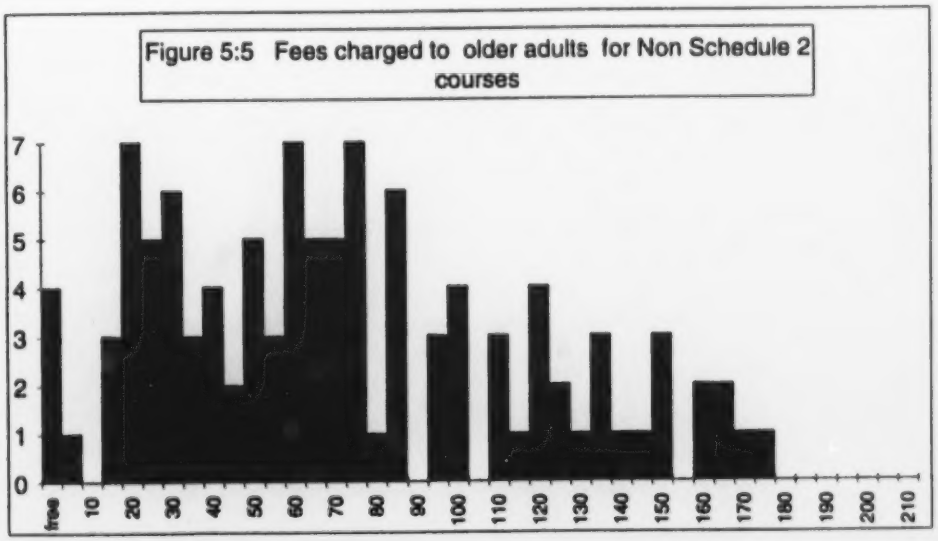


5.8.1 Of those respondents who specified the criteria for concessions to older adults, only 12% now use the state pension as a sole criteria for concessions. One has this year abolished concessions for Senior Citizens as such, and another states that "the pension age has been equalised at 60+ for both women and men". It is becoming increasingly common to use age as a basis, sometimes in conjunction with income criteria. 60% give concessions to anyone over 60, plus 18% to people over 60 and "retired" or "not in full-time employment", and 2% to people over 60 "on low income". 6% give concessions to people over 65, plus 2% which specify "over 65 and on State benefit". Havering, which had compromised at age 64, has this year reduced the age limit to 63. One LEA (which does not normally give concessions to people on Income Support) gives a 50% reduction to anyone over 60, but a full remission to people over 60 and on Income Support. Another gives a 50% reduction to anyone over 60, and a full remission to people over 60 eligible for revised Community Charge payments.



5.8.2 One LEA has this year abolished the 50% reduction for pensioners over 60, and three others specified that the concessionary rate for older adults has been increased at a higher percentage than the standard rate, eg they are now charged 60% of the full fee rather than 50%.



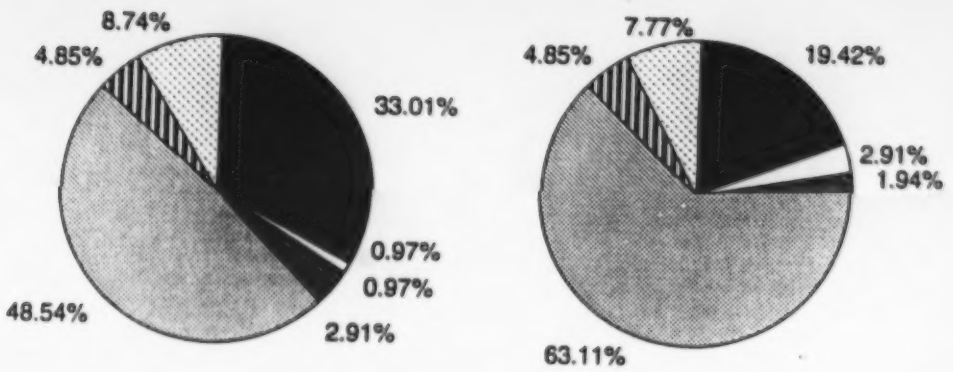


5.8.3 For certificate-bearing courses the mean and median fee charged to older adults is 56pph. For Non-Schedule 2 courses the mean fee is 71pph, and the median is 65pph.

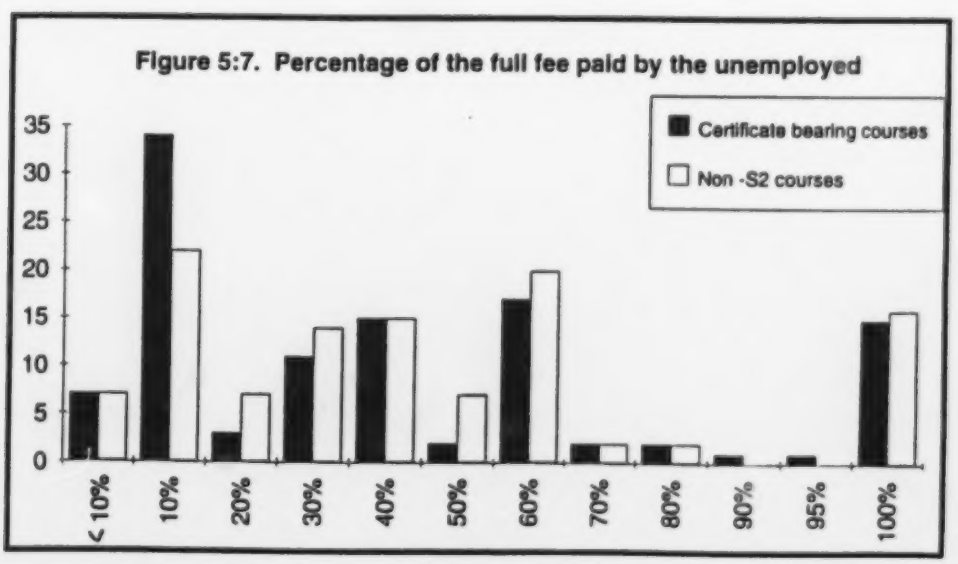
5.9 **Concessions to unemployed students**

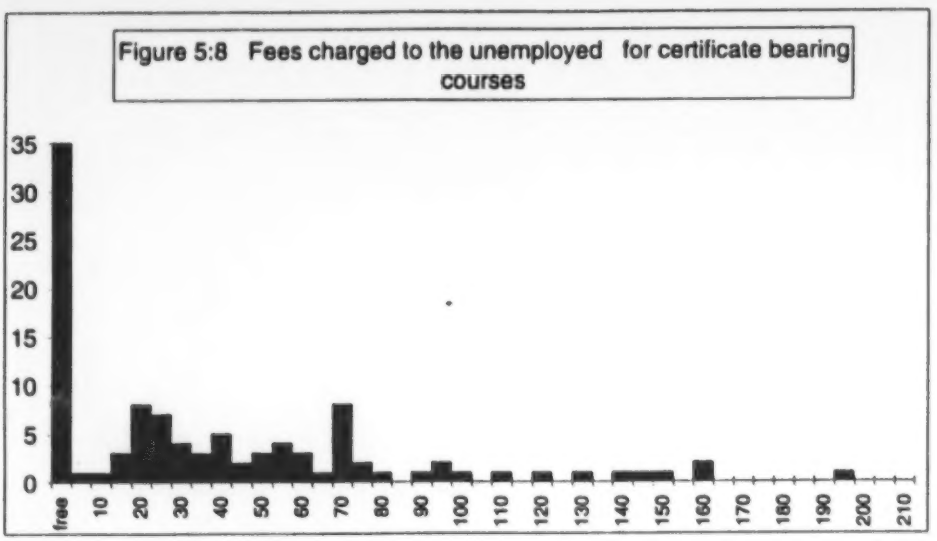
Certificate-bearing courses **Non-Schedule 2 courses**

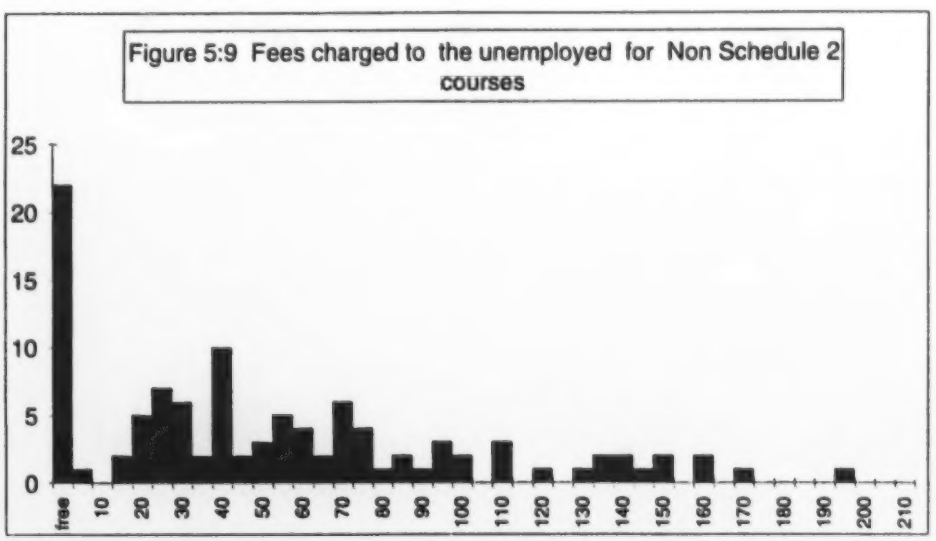
Figure 5.6



5.9.1 Two respondents specified that students must be registered as unemployed to qualify for these concessions, and two specified that they must actually be receiving benefit.





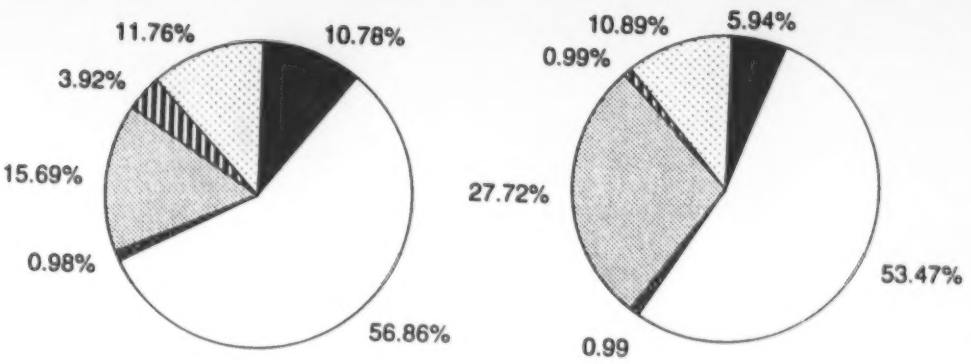


5.9.2 For certificate-bearing courses the mean fee charged to unemployed students is 38pph, and the median is 25pph. For Non-Schedule 2 courses the mean fee is 52pph, and the median is 40pph.

5.10 Concessions to unwaged students

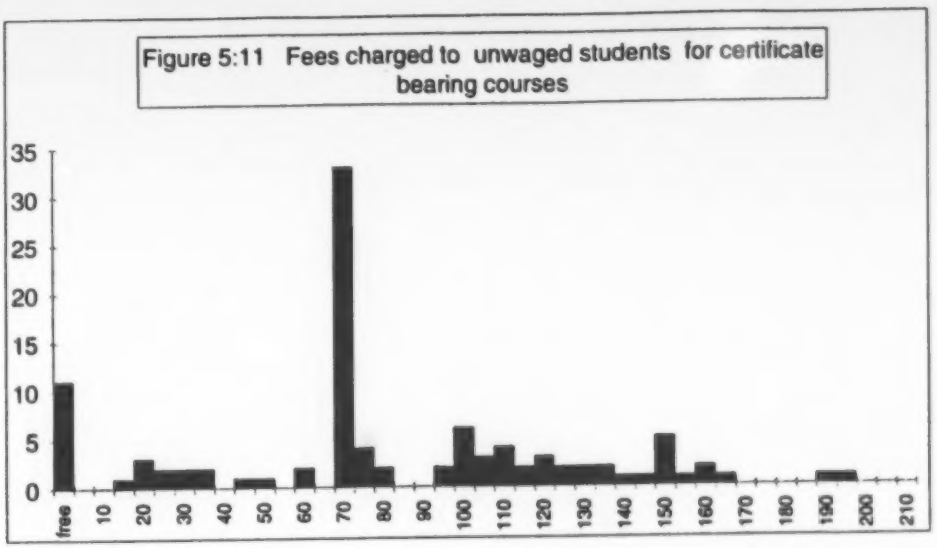
Certificate-bearing courses **Non-Schedule 2 courses**

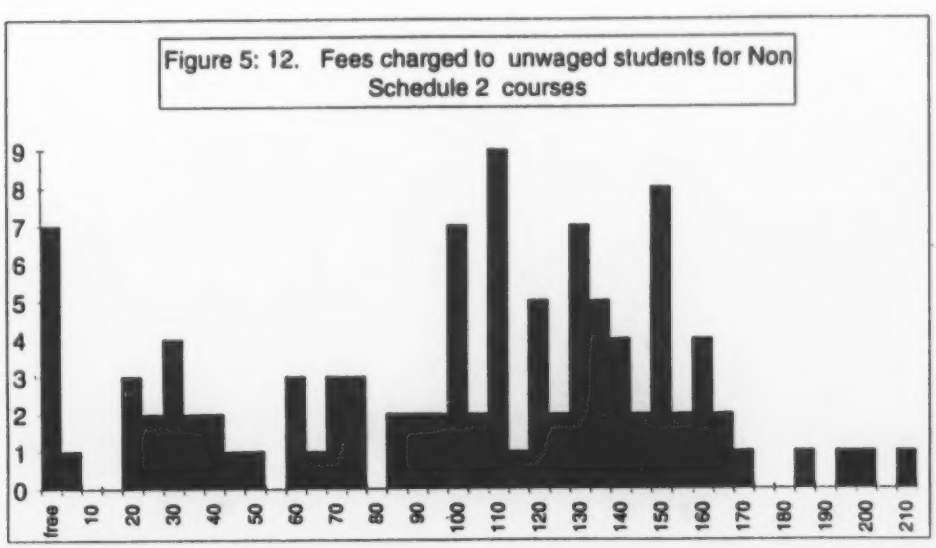
Figure 5.10



5.10.1 One LEA specified that the spouse of the student must also be unwaged. One gave concessions to the unwaged spouse of an unemployed person, and another also to the spouse of someone on Income Support of Family Credit. One specified that the student must have an income below the level of Income Support, and another that there must be "evidence of hardship".

5.10.2 In addition to the figures given above, nine LEAs give concessions to the dependents of people eligible for concessions.



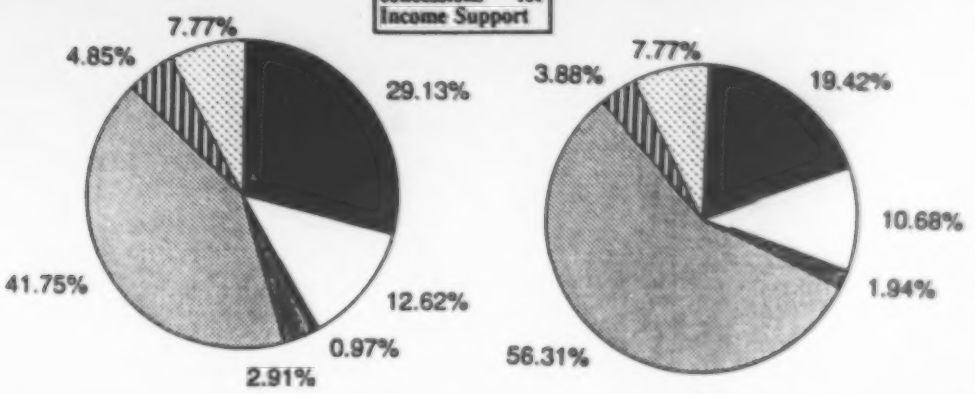


5.10.3 For certificate-bearing courses the mean fee charged to unwaged students is 78pph, and the median is 66pph. For Non-Schedule 2 courses the mean fee is 100pph, and the median is 110pph.

5.11 **Concessions to students receiving Income Support or Family Credit**

Certificate-bearing courses **Non-Schedule 2 courses**

Figure 5.13: concessions for Income Support



Certificate-bearing courses **Non-Schedule 2 courses**

Figure 5.14: concessions for Family Credit

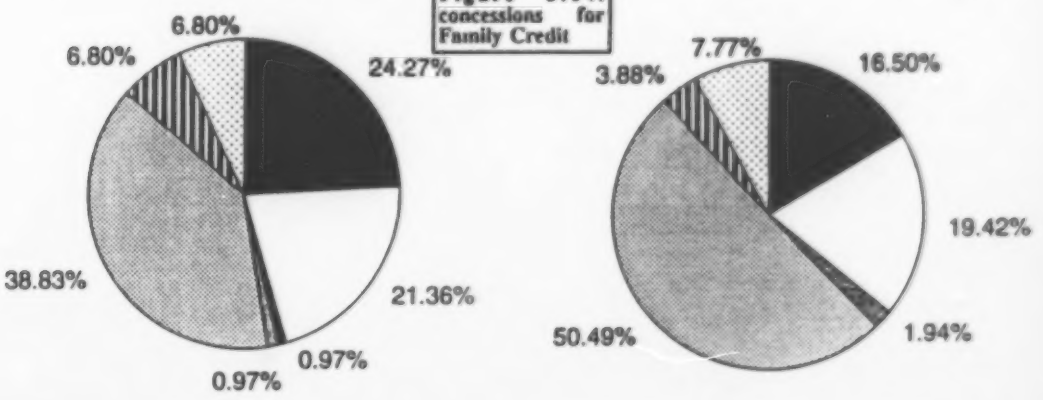
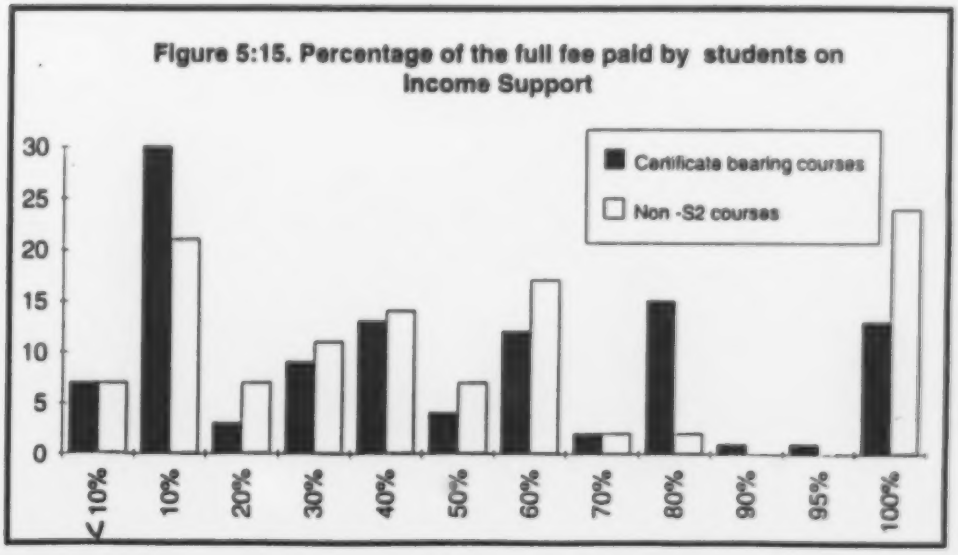


Figure 5:15. Percentage of the full fee paid by students on Income Support



5.11.1 As may be seen from the pie charts in Figures 5:13 and 5:14, these two benefits are treated as approximately equal, with Family Credit being a criterion for concessions in slightly fewer LEAs than Income Support, which is the most common criterion after unemployment. One LEA has this year added Family Credit to the list of benefits qualifying a students for concession.

Figure 5:16a Fees charged to students on Income Support for certificate bearing courses

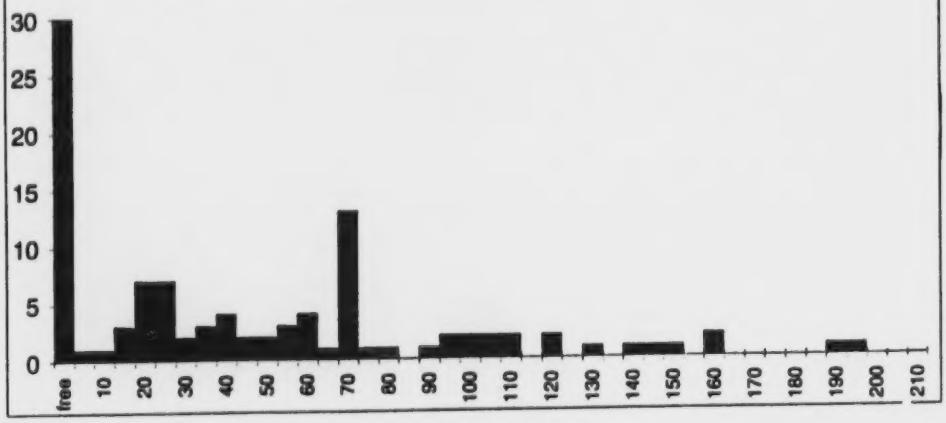
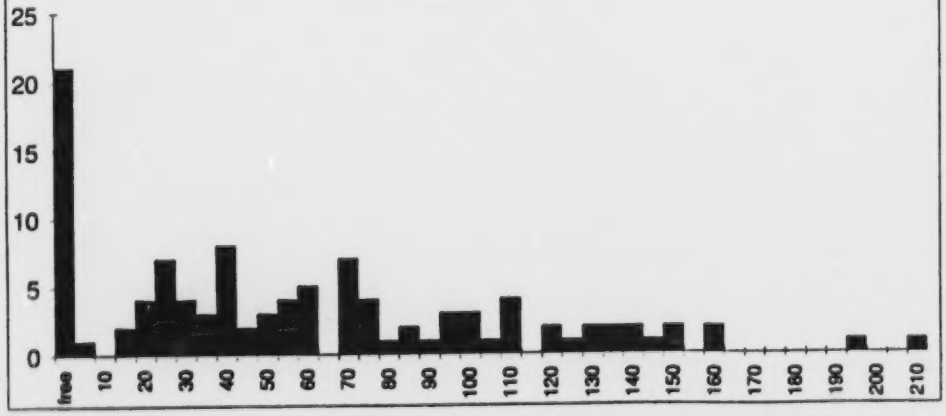


Figure 5:16 b Fees charged to students on Income Support for Non Schedule 2 courses

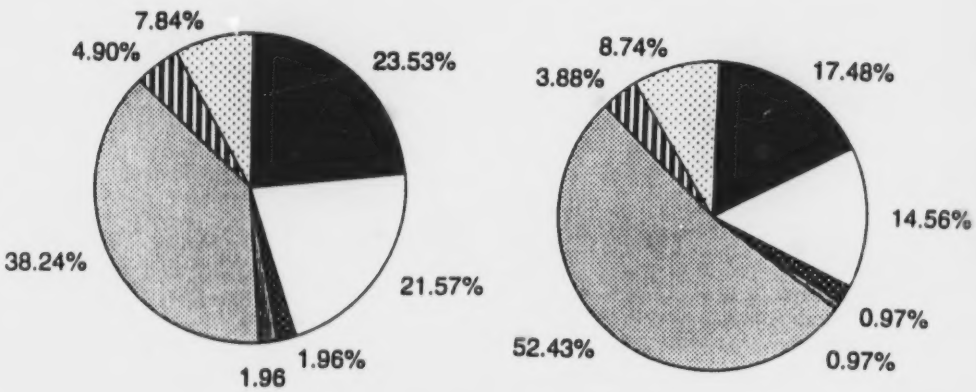


5.11.2 For certificate-bearing courses the mean fee charged to students on Income Support is 45pph, and the median is 33pph. The mean fee charged to students on Family Credit is 52pph, and the median is 43pph. For Non-Schedule 2 courses the mean fee charged to students on Income Support is 58pph, and the median is 50pph. The mean fee charged to students on Family Credit is 66pph, and the median is 56pph.

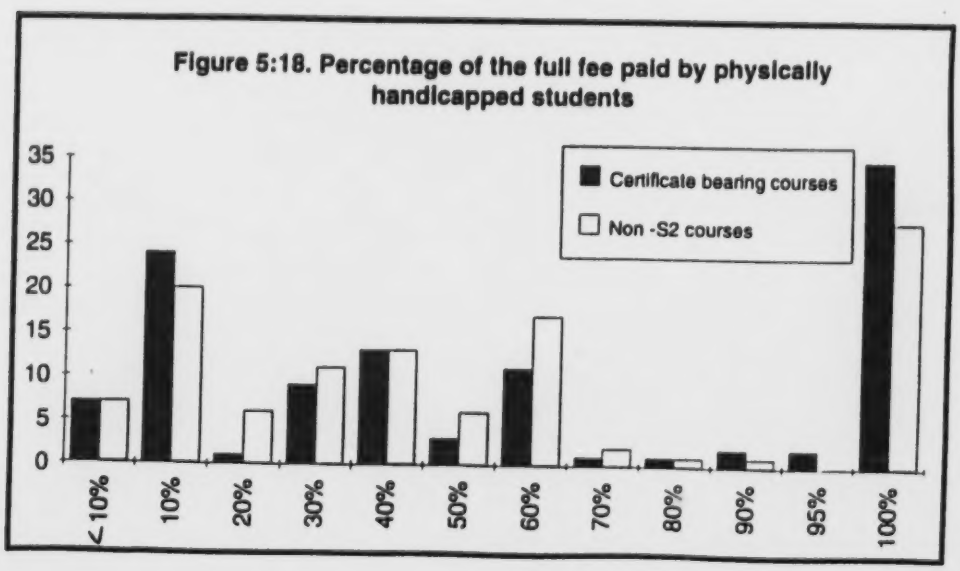
5.12 Concessions to physically handicapped students

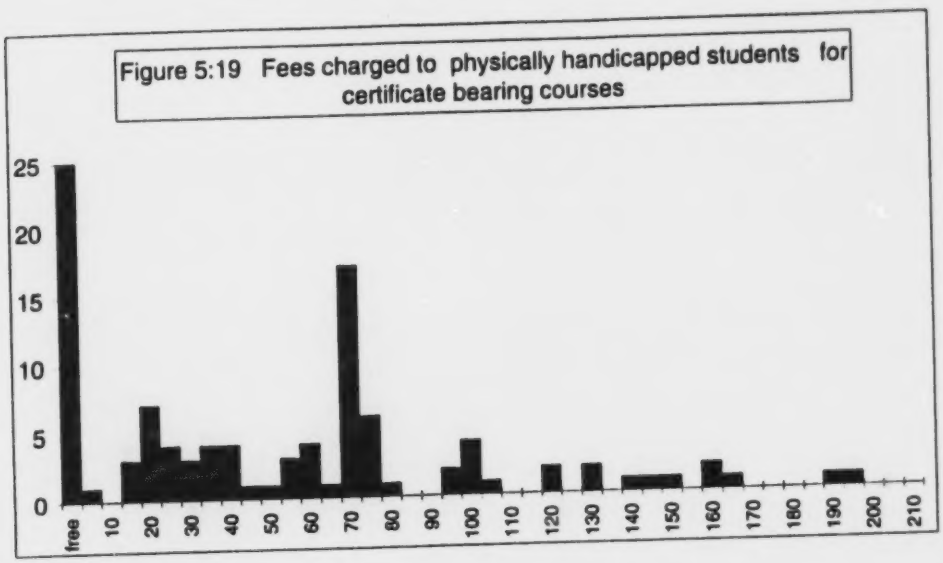
Certificate-bearing courses **Non-Schedule 2 courses**

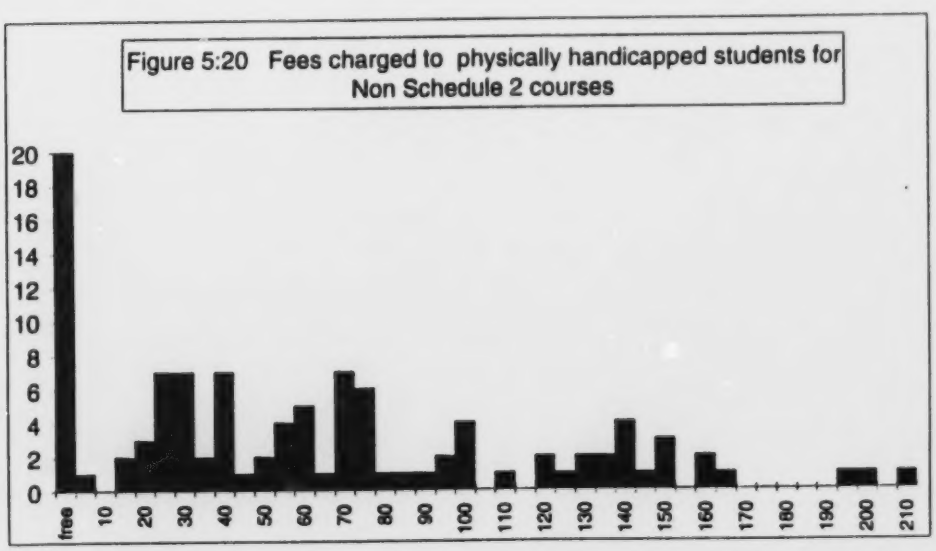
Figure 5.17



5.12.1 Of those LEAs giving concessions to physically handicapped students, 23% specified that they must be registered disabled (one specified that they must be "registered and not working"), and 18% specified that they must actually be receiving related benefits, eg Invalidity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance. A further 6% gave concessions to anyone on State benefits, so that someone receiving disability benefits would automatically qualify. Others specified that students must be "not in full-time employment" or "not required to register for work by the DSS". In addition to the above figures, one LEA charges a reduced fee to students receiving Mobility Allowance.





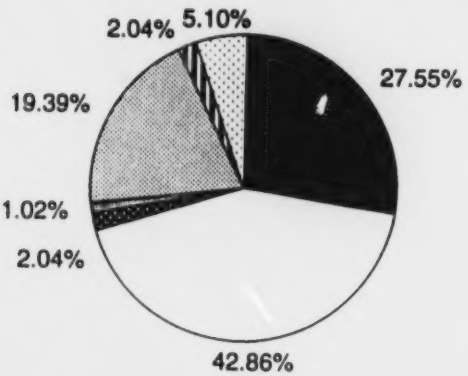


5.12.2 For certificate-bearing courses the mean fee charged to physically handicapped students is 51pph, and the median is 48pph. For Non-Schedule 2 courses the mean fee is 61pph, and the median is 53pph.

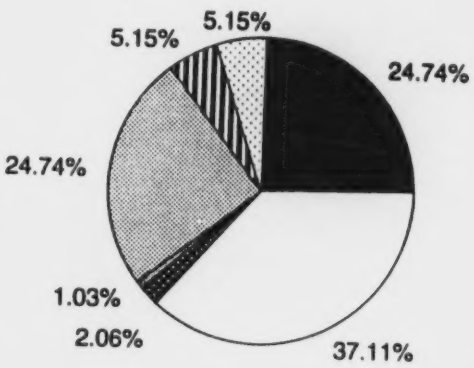
5.13 **Concessions to students with learning disabilities**

Certificate-bearing courses

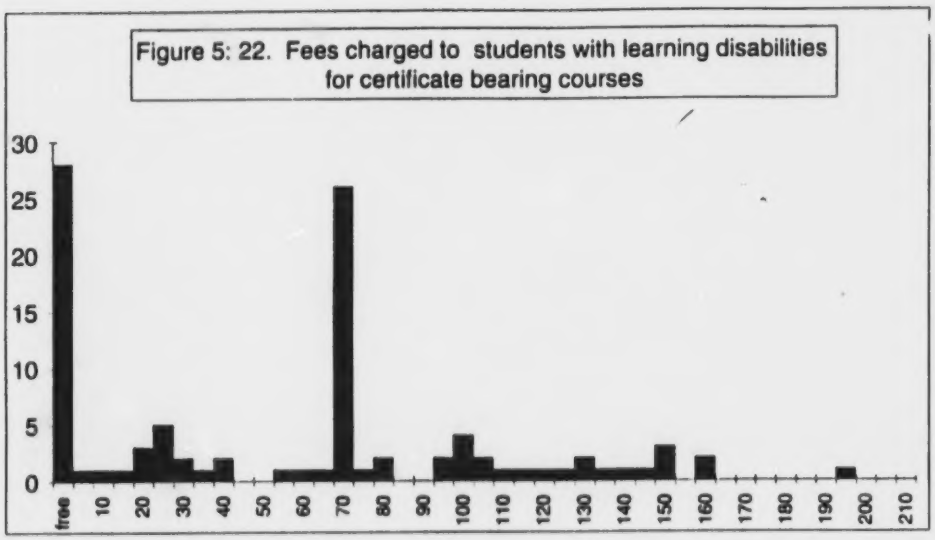
Figure 5.21

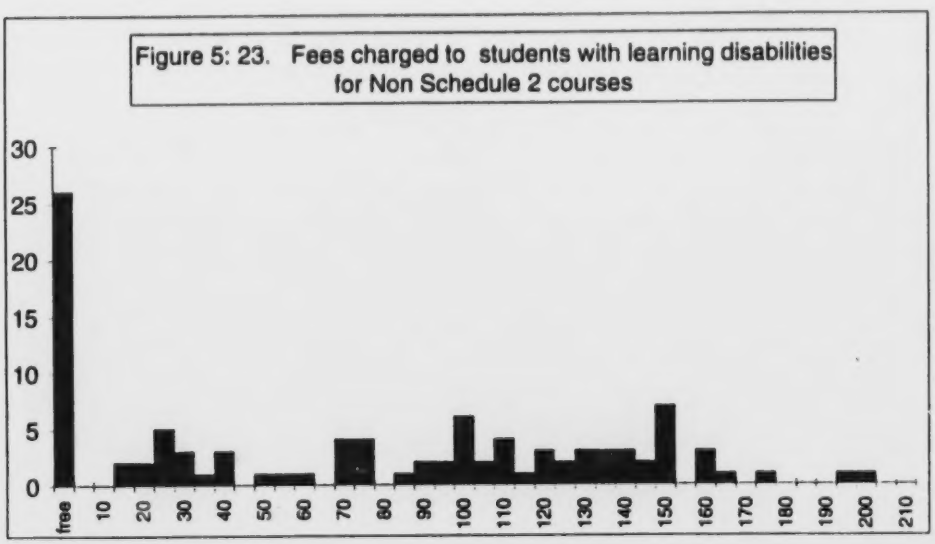


Non-Schedule 2 courses



5.13.1 Of those LEAs giving concessions on mainstream courses to students with learning disabilities, 4% specified that the student must be registered, and 10% that they must be receiving state benefits. Some allowed such concessions "at the Principal's discretion"; in others the students must be "unable to work", or identified as having learning disabilities by the Curriculum Manager or the Learning Disabilities Coordinator, or "through a recognised agency". One gave concessions on Literacy and Numeracy courses only.



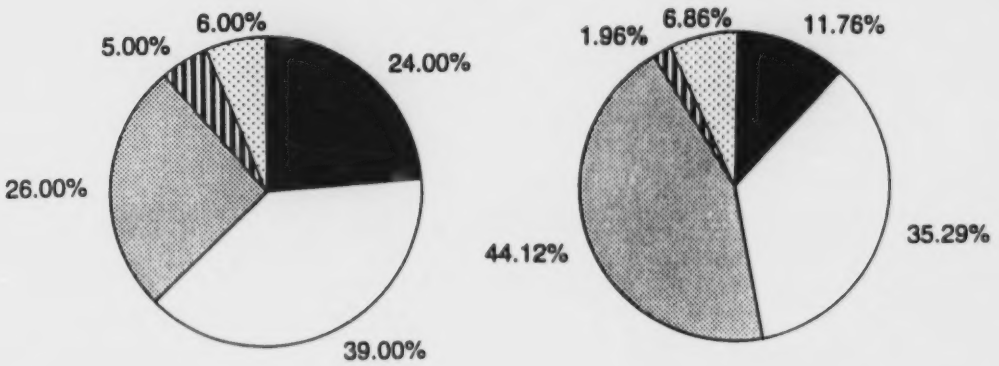


5.13.2 For mainstream certificate-bearing courses the mean fee charged to students with learning disabilities on is 54pph, and the median is 66pph. For Non-Schedule 2 courses the mean fee is 72pph, and the median is 74pph.

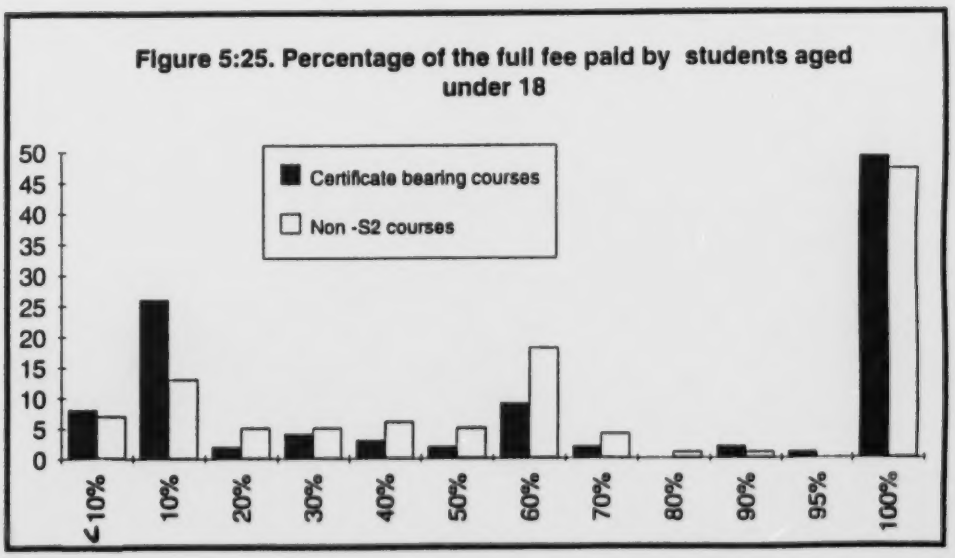
5.14 **Concessions to students aged under 18 not in full time education**

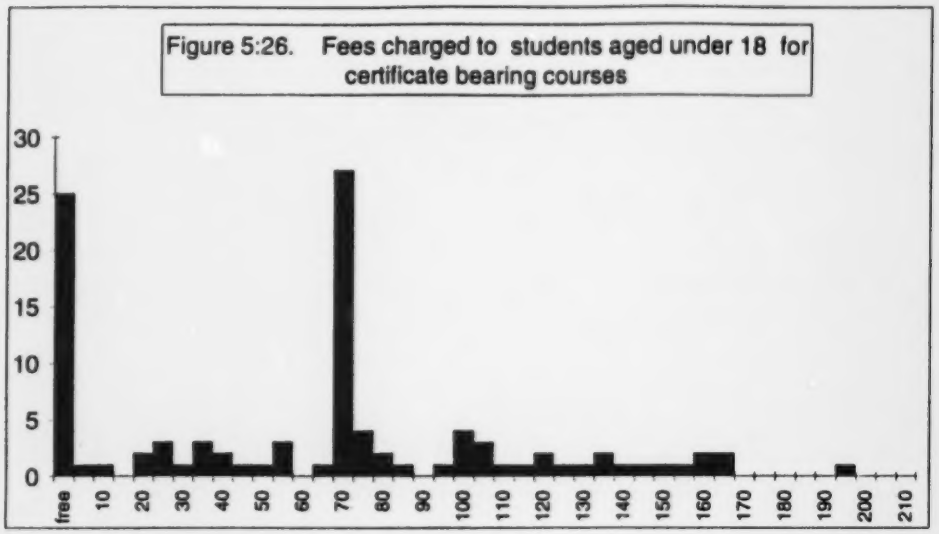
Certificate-bearing courses **Non-Schedule 2 courses**

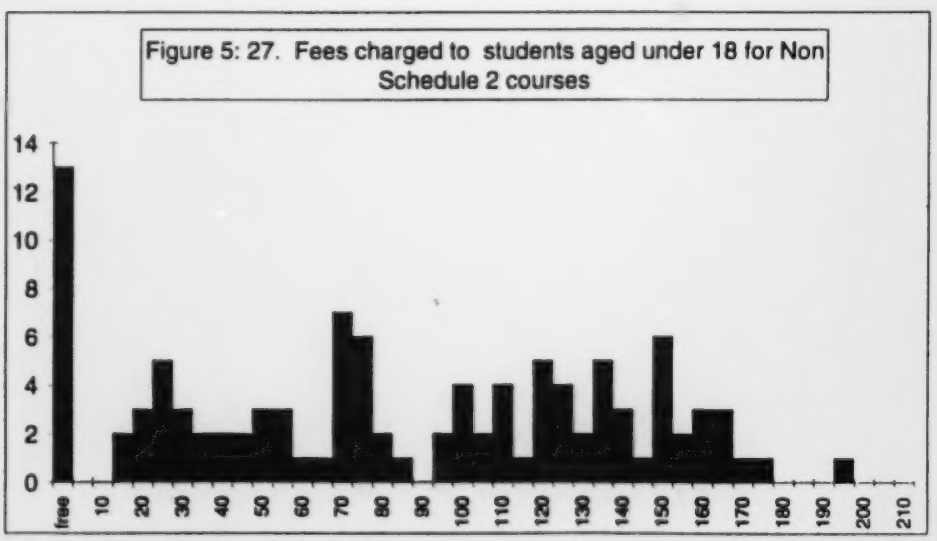
Figure 5.24



5.14.1 In addition to the above figures, four LEAs mentioned concessions to trainees on Youth Training schemes taking courses not related to their main training.





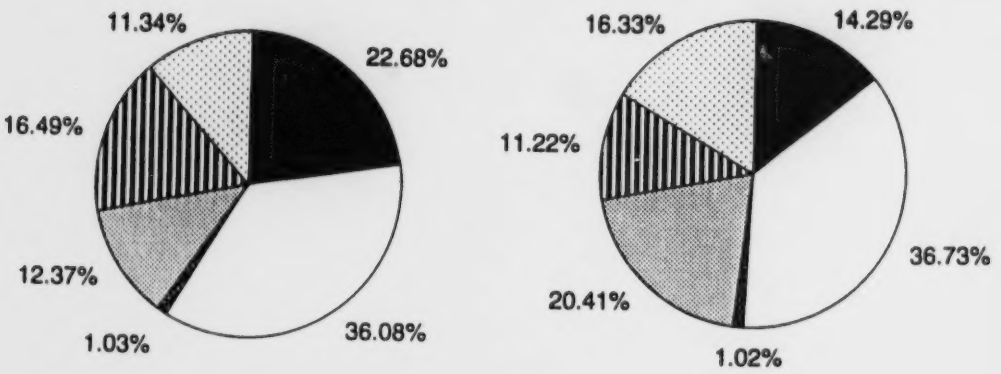


5.14.2 For certificate-bearing courses the mean fee charged to under-18s is 60pph, and the median is 66pph. For Non-Schedule 2 courses the mean fee is 83pph, and the median is 77pph.

5.15 **Concessions to other groups**

Certificate-bearing courses **Non-Schedule 2 courses**

Figure 5.28: concessions in hardship cases



5.15.1 *Discretionary concessions*

It is often left to the discretion of centre heads to give concessions in individual cases of hardship, or, in 11 cases, to any student. In other cases concessions to individuals are at the discretion of the Governing Body of the centre or College, or in one case the Chair of the Education Committee.

5.15.2 *Other Criteria*

Other LEAs give concessions to the following groups:

- Widows (8 LEAs)
- Students on Housing Benefit (8 LEAs)
- Students on Community Charge Benefit or rebate, or who are exempt from paying the Community Charge (6 LEAs)
- Students on Employment Training (5 LEAs)
- Students on any means-tested benefit (4 LEAs)
- Single Parents, or single parents on Income Support (4 LEAs)
- Refugees or asylum seekers (3 LEAs)

5.15.3 *Leisure Passports*

Four LEAs give concessions to holders of "passports" which are given to residents on means-tested benefits. In one this scheme is new this year.

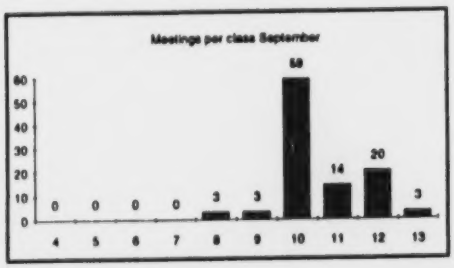
SECTION 6

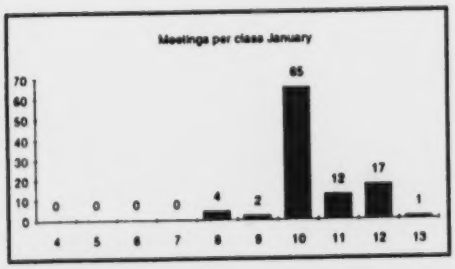
Number and length of class meetings

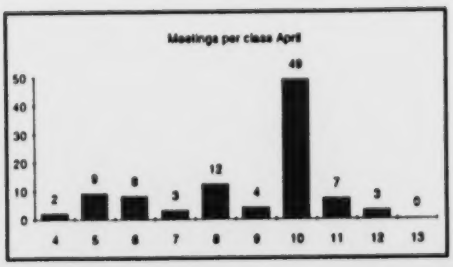
6.1 The standard term for non-Schedule 2 courses is 10 weeks, with each class lasting two hours. However, this does not include the many shorter courses and one-day courses that are run. The standard course length has generally remained the same as last year.

6.2 **Meetings per term**

Figure 6:1. Number of meetings per term for the September, January and April terms.







Berkshire runs four 8-week terms (here counted as three 12-week terms). This is felt to encourage student interest and enrolments.

6.3 Reductions in course length

Six LEAs have reduced the overall number of meetings per term. Islington have reduced the length of the Autumn term from 11 weeks to 9, and the Spring term from 11 weeks to 8, because of budget cuts. Examination courses have been protected, but Basic Education and Access courses are included in the reductions.

6.4 Average time per meeting

Hours	Percentage of responding LEAs
2 1/2 hours or more	2
Approximately 2 hours	75
Approximately 1 3/4 hours	10
Approximately 1 1/2 hours	13

Most LEAs reported no change in the length of class meeting. Three had reduced it, as a means of reducing costs either for the LEA itself, or for the students when there has been a large increase in the hourly fee.

SECTION 7

Methods and Timing of payment

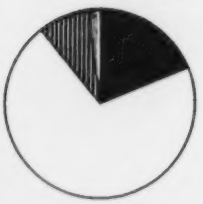
7.1 It is often left for individual centres to decide on methods and timing of payment, both where centres decide the fees and also where the fees are set by the LEA.

Schedule 2 courses **Non-Schedule 2 courses**

7.2 **FEES PAID TERMLY**

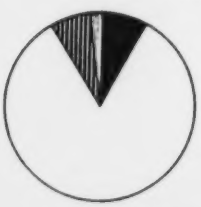
70% of respondents allowed fees for two-term courses to be paid termly, or occasionally for the second payment to be made towards the end of the first term. One LEA specified that the a request must be made in writing to the centre head.

7.3 **PAYMENT IN INSTALMENTS**

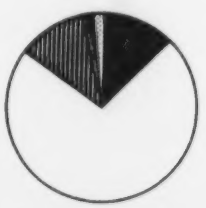


20% allowed payments in instalments of less than one term. In addition, several pointed out that this could often be arranged with the centre head where a particular student is in financial difficulties.

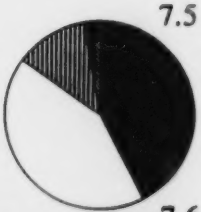
7.4 **PAYMENT PER CLASS MEETING**



Normally the only fees paid at each class meeting are fees for activities such as sports or some self-financing courses, where students only pay for the lessons they use. A few LEAs allow students in financial hardship to pay weekly.

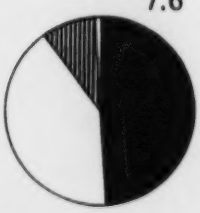


7.5 **CREDIT CARDS**



41% of respondents allow payment by credit card throughout the LEA, and in a further 20% credit cards are used in some centres.

7.6 **POSTAL ENROLMENT**



58% of respondents have postal enrolment to some extent, many found that few students made use of it. One LEA allows postal enrolment only for people with physical disabilities.

Key

■ Yes
□ No
▮ In some centres
▩ In CFEs only
▨ To some students
▨ For certain courses

SECTION 8

Enrolments

8.1 Total enrolments

The latest available figures for each LEA (only 60 LEAs were able to give November 1992 figures), give an estimated total of approximately 1,600,000 enrolments in LEA-provided education for adults. In many LEAs this does not include enrolments in Colleges of Further Education, but in others CFE enrolments are included as Colleges are still often a major part of LEA provision for adults.

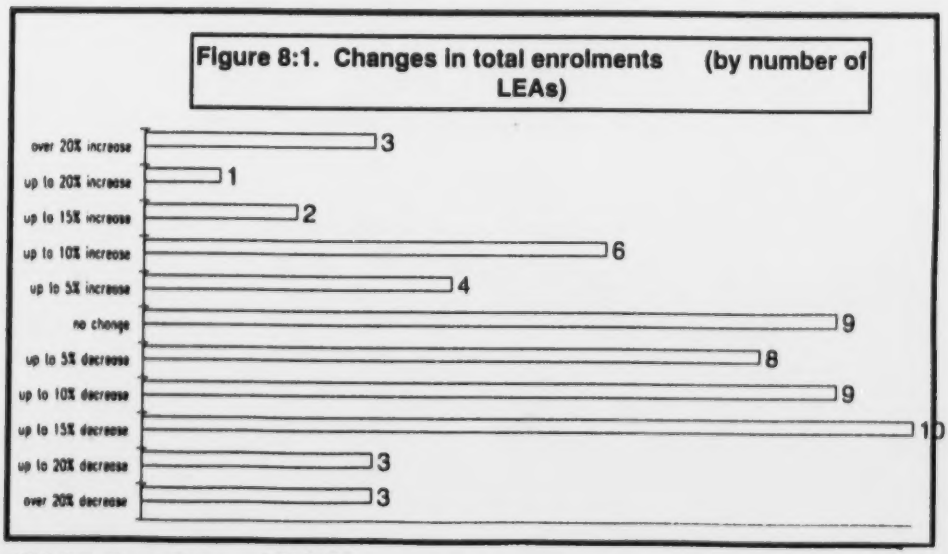
8.2 Student data

Statistical data on the student characteristics listed below (as well as on age and gender) is collected on enrolment by 63 LEAs.

- 69 LEAs: Whether student is employed or unemployed
- 47 LEAs: Physical disabilities (often simply whether student is eligible for concessions as a disabled student)
- 46 LEAs: Ethnic origin
- 15 LEAs: Occupation
- 8 LEAs: Qualifications gained at school
- 5 LEAs: Post-school education and experience

8.3 Changes in enrolments

Figure 8:1 shows the percentage change in enrolments of those LEAs that were able to give figures for both 1991 and 1992.



8.3.1 **Reduced provision**

In seven LEAs the decrease in enrolments was attributed to reduced provision due to budget cuts.

Bury: "Reorganisation and a reduction of £330,000 from the new combined Community Education Service lead to a 20% reduction in enrolments."

Manchester: "Changes in the level of provision lead to a reduction in enrolments of 20%"

Barking & Dagenham: "Slight reduction in provision; enrolments down 12%"

Islington: "Cuts have lead to a much smaller programme on offer"

This seems to be particularly common where AE is delivered through Further Education Colleges:

Wigan: "Reduction in enrolments due to reduced provision; major cutback in College AE budget. (Community Education Centres & Community High Schools are not affected)"

Wirral: "Reduction of college budgets by over £1,000,000 resulted in reduced provision of non-accredited courses" [Total enrolments down 10%]

Non-Schedule 2 work has in many cases borne the main part of the reductions:

Sandwell: "AE Service budget 1992/3 was reduced by 7%. 40% reduction in provision of Non-Schedule 2 work reflected in enrolments..."

However, the decrease in enrolments in Sandwell was considerably less than 40%, as the classes were fuller. The full effect of reductions in provision is not always seen in the first year, as existing students will often enrol on a class of their second choice if their first choice of subject is not available. The level of fees charged, with its immediate effect on student demand, is more likely to have a striking effect on enrolments, which may begin to pick up again the following year.

8.3.2 **The effect of fee increases**

Eight respondents attributed a decline in enrolments to fee increases above the level of inflation:

Croydon: "Fall in enrolment due partly to price rises" [of 37 to 50%]

Havering: "Increases [11%] in fee levels above the prevailing rate of inflation believed to have detrimental impact on enrolment numbers"

Tameside: "Increase in fees for non-priority non-vocational work has seriously affected enrolments" [40% decrease]

Sefton: "Minor drop in Non-Schedule 2 enrolment [3%] occasioned by additional fee increase. "

8.3.3 Changes in concessions policies

Several LEAs who have changed their criteria for eligibility for concessions, or who have increased the percentage of the full rate paid by concessionary students, reported that this has had a noticeable effect on the enrolment of the types of people affected. This applies particularly to less generous concessions for the over-60s:

South Glamorgan: "Drop in student numbers caused partly by withdrawal of 50% reduction for OAPs over 60."

Surrey: "Enrolments down 9%. Reasons include the reduction of discount from 30% to 20% for persons over 60 years."

Trafford: "Increase in fees for over 60s has reduced numbers considerably"

Northumberland: "Only 50% remission (previously 100%). This has had a significant effect - enrolments have reduced by 14%"

8.3.4 Effects of recession

Several respondents from London, the South East and East attributed the decline in enrolments to the recession.

Bedfordshire: "an overall drop of 8-12% due to the economic climate..."

Buckinghamshire: "Enrolments slightly down overall; the inner cities are hit by the recession"

West Sussex: "Recession has had impact almost all over the county"

Croydon: "Fall in enrolment partly the effect of recession; more women working part-time in the evenings (partner unemployed)"

Lambeth: "...Increasing poverty has meant increasing number of students who cannot afford even concessionary fees"

Merton: "Mainstream full-fee Non Schedule 2 enrolments have declined sharply [20%] in the current recession"

In many LEAs [eg Norfolk, Gloucestershire] enrolments have declined in areas of high unemployment, while remaining approximately the same overall.

8.3.5 Increases in enrolments

Two LEAs attributed an increase in enrolments to "better marketing" [Coventry] or "good promotional publicity" [Derbyshire]. In addition, Lambeth reported that more effective recruitment helped to offset the lack of provision. Other slight increases were reported in LEAs which in 1991 were being reorganised due to budget cuts. A few respondents reported increased student demand in particular areas, possibly due to national publicity or unemployment.

8.4 **The Shift to Schedule 2 provision.**

Figure 8.2 shows the percentage increases/decreases in certificate-bearing courses and Non-Schedule 2 courses respectively. Only 37 LEAs were able to give a breakdown of enrolment figures, but among these there was a noticeable shift towards accredited courses and away from courses not categorised under Schedule 2; a trend which was already discernible in last year's Fees Survey, and which is reflected in comments from many other LEAs:

Harrow: "Colleges switching to Schedule 2 courses wherever possible. Some colleges withdrawing from all but full-cost recovery non-vocational courses"

Liverpool: "Increase in Schedule 2 enrolments due to curriculum development"

Doncaster: "Reduction in non-vocational courses and equivalent increase in vocational"

There are some indications that it is not only the provision, but also the student demand for certificate-bearing courses that is increasing. This is noted particularly in areas recently hit by recession, as students hope that Basic Education and GCSEs will help them to find jobs. At the same time, the widening of the difference in the hourly fee between Schedule 2 and Non-Schedule 2 courses, is bound to make Schedule 2 courses financially increasingly attractive to students.

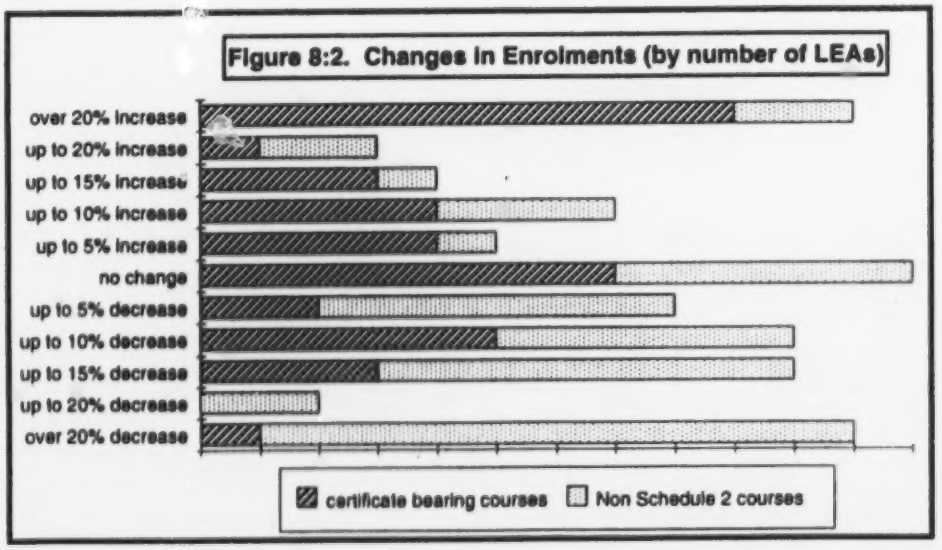


Figure 8:2. Changes in Enrolments (by number of LEAs)
over 20% increase
up to 20% increase
up to 15% increase
up to 10% increase
up to 5% increase
no change
up to 5% decrease
up to 10% decrease
up to 15% decrease
up to 20% decrease
over 20% decrease
certificate bearing courses
Non Schedule 2 courses

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